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OCTOBER EXPORTS, IMPORTS DIP, TRADE DEFICIT NARROWS

After recording positive growth in September, India's exports fell 5.4% to $24.82 billion in October, latest data showed

PETROLEUM, GEMS, LEATHER SHIPMENTS DOWN

Lower shipments in petroleum products (down 53.30%) and India's mainstays gems & jewellery (down 21.27%), and leather (down 16.69%) saw exports falling in the festive month. Imports also fell 11.56% to $33.6 billion, leading to trade deficit narrowing to $8.78 billion. Sectors which grew include rice, oil meals, iron ore, oil seeds, carpet, pharma and spices

PM MODI TO CHAIR GLOBAL INVESTOR MEET

- PM Narendra Modi will chair a virtual global investor round table on Thursday, which will be attended by leading global investors
- It will be an exclusive dialogue between global institutional investors, Indian business leaders and the highest decision-makers from the Indian govt and financial market regulators P13

Stimulus

PACKAGE WILL BE UNVEILED SOON, SAID TARUN BAJAJ, SECRETARY - DEA

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Trump or Biden? Florida may offer the earliest clue

After around 100 million cast their ballot early, voters queued up to decide who will be their next president amid Covid worries and fears of violence if Trump loses, but refuses to concede defeat. A look at the race to 270 electoral college votes for outright victory

Security fencing put up around White House in Washington on Tuesday | AP

EXPECT DELAY

First polls close at 4.30 am IST on Tuesday, but the last one will be open toll 11.30 am on Wednesday, so the final results will be delayed

No uniform rule on how and when to count postal ballots. Also, states differ in postal ballot deadlines. Georgia, for instance, will count ballots received on or before November 3, but others like Ohio will accept late ballots if they have the November 3 postmark

MARKETS BUOYANT

US stocks led the rally in global equity markets amid optimism about Biden's victory and hopes for fresh stimulus. Dow Jones up; major S&P indexes stay north

WHITE HOUSE 'LOCKDOWN'

Amid concern over possible violence, with some even fearing a civil war, a fence was erected around the White House complex, the Ellipse and Lafayette Square

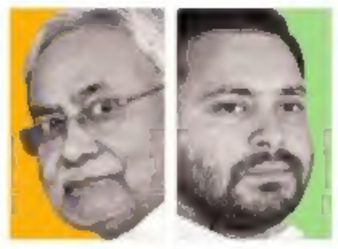
National Guard troops have been put on standby

THE FLORIDA FACTOR

Of all the swing states, Florida is the largest with 29 electoral college votes. Its result will be declared early as the state has been counting the mail-in ballots as they arrive, unlike others that begin the counting process today. If Trump loses Florida, analysts say it will be very tough for him to pull off a win | P12

NITISH RULE ENDED ANARCHY, SAYS MODI

Under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Bihar had left behind the darkness of insecurity and anarchy of the RJD rule, PM Narendra Modi said. "Roads and markets today bustle with people even late at night."



BOTH TEJASHWI & I ARE THE FUTURE: RAHUL

"NDA has plundered Bihar and lied to the people. Modi and Nitish are a spent force have not done anything for the state. But our alliance will deliver. Tejashwi ji and me are the future," Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said

'Parivartan' looks certain, but it may mean more than Nitish or Tejashwi in Bihar

MUKESH RANJAN
@ Bhagalpur/Kishenganj/Khagaria

Voters stand in queues patiently awaiting their turn to cast their votes during the second phase of Bihar Assembly elections in Patna on Tuesday | PTI

IF random voices of voters were to be taken as an indication of what might come on November 10, when votes for the Bihar polls are counted, then the state will see a *parivartan* (change). At many villages and towns, especially in the poorest districts, there is a sense of despair and even anger.

On the face of it, this could be interpreted as a sign that the 15-year rule of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is coming to an end and that his challenger, Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav, is going to win hands down.

Yet, the mood of the people is not as black and white as it may seem, rather there is a lot of grey. So while there is a cry for change, the voters don't want the RJD. The voters agree that Nitish has brought development, but are angry with him that he has failed on employment, migrants and bureaucratic corruption.

In other words, Nitish and Tejashwi seem to be their own biggest enemy. Rudra Kumar, a final-year graduation student at Zero Mile in Naugachia village of Bhagalpur district, said being a Yadav, he would vote for the RJD candidate from his Gopalpur seat, but praised both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and CM Nitish Kumar.

"I want the RJD to win from my seat, but an NDA government must be formed in Bihar," he said. Explaining the contradiction, Kumar said: "If Tejashwi Yadav comes to power, there will be jungle raj in Bihar once again."

Tejashwi rallies are drawing huge crowds where the mood is of parivartan, but his party's record of lawlessness haunts him. And if a taste of things under his possible regime was needed, it came on Tuesday, hours after voting in a constituency of Patna.

Kavindra Mahato, 45, and his family were allegedly thrashed by RJD goons for not voting for their party. The victim has filed a written complaint with the police against some unknown persons. Narrating the incident to a local video journalist, Mahato alleged that the goons tore his shirt.

If Tejashwi falls under his own weight, then Nitish could also trip on his own.

Anil Kumar Yadav of East Thatha village in Khagaria district admitted that under Nitish, the state has seen development. "The condition of main roads and highways along with electricity and water has definitely improved in the state," Yadav said.

CONTINUED ON : P10

DECIDE 2020 BIHAR **53.51%**

Turnout in Phase II of Bihar polls till 5 pm. Figure likely to go up. Total 53.79% polling in two phases so far as against 55.35% in 2015

Sira sees good turnout, but poor voting in RR Nagar

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

Voters show their inked fingers after casting their ballot for bypolls to the RR Nagar assembly seat, in Bengaluru on Tuesday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

RR NAGAR	SIRA
45.24%	82.31%
In the 2018 Assembly polls, the constituency saw a voter turnout of **54.38%**, which was lower that the 2013 turnout of **56.82%**	In the 2018 Assembly polls, the constituency saw a voter turnout of **84.77%**, which was higher that the 2013 turnout of **79.19%**

AMID a pandemic and safety precautions in place, the Election Commission successfully concluded polling for Sira and Rajarajeshwari Nagar Assembly constituencies on Tuesday. While Sira recorded about 82.31 per cent turnout in the provisional estimates at end of polling, Rajarajeshwari Nagar recorded an abysmally low turnout at 45.24 per cent — almost 10 per cent lesser than the turnout for the 2018 assembly election. Of the 2,15,725 registered electors in Sira, 1,77,553 voters polled on Tuesday, while in Rajarajeshwari Nagar, of the 4,62,210 eligible electors, only 2,09,083 voted. Overall polling stood at 57.04 per cent. There may be a slight revision in the numbers after final calculation.

The low voter turnout in Rajarajeshwari Nagar came as a dampener for the BJP and the Congress, which are in a direct fight for the seat. The high voter turnout in Sira, despite the pandemic, has brought cheer to the three major parties, with all of them expecting a sure-shot victory.

Bypolls usually witness lower voter turnout, but Sira has proved to be an exception. In 2018, the seat had seen 84.77 per cent polling. The pandemic seems to have barely deterred voters, with some polling stations like Saluparahalli recording 94.3 per cent turnout. Rajarajeshwari Nagar has always recorded low voter turnout, but Tuesday's turnout was the worst in the last few elections.

Political parties are of the opinion that the low voter turnout may be for a myriad of reasons ranging from a lack of enthusiasm, pandemic scare, reverse migration of voters owing to 'Work From Home' or lockdown effect to a lack of real competition among candidates.

"We expected about 5-6 per cent more polling in Rajarajeshwari Nagar, but given the turnout, we expect to win with a margin of 21,000-22,000 votes. In Sira, we are confident of winning with a 10,000 vote margin. If not for the low turnout, we would have won with 40,000 vote margin in RR Nagar," claimed BJP national general secretary C T Ravi.

The Congress too is worried about the turnout in Rajarajeshwari Nagar. "Many migrant workers have not returned to their homes in the constituency due to the government's failure. We are confident that voters have chosen us. In Sira, T B Jayachandra will win with a big margin though it being a three-cornered fight," said KPCC working president Saleem Ahmed.

CONTINUED ON: P7

VIENNA SHOCKER

Four dead, 17 wounded in suspected terror attack

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AT LEAST four people were killed in Vienna and 17 were wounded, some of them critically, when gunmen fired upon people at random in the Austrian capital on Monday night. One of the assailants, identified as 20-year-old ISIS sympathiser Kujtim Fejzulai, was shot dead by police. He was reportedly wearing a fake suicide vest. Police said they were searching for at least one more shooter still at large. The shooting happened in the heart of Vienna hours before a coronavirus lockdown started, Austrian authorities said on Tuesday.

Of the four killed, two were women, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said, terming it an Islamist terror attack. "It was an attack out of hatred — hatred for our fundamental values, hatred for our way of life, hatred for our democracy in which all people have equal rights and dignity," he added.

Authorities said of the 17 injured in the attack, seven were in life-threatening condition.

According to reports, the attacker who was shot dead was released from jail last year after spending 22 months of incarceration for trying to travel to Syria to join the ISIS.

The terror attack drew widespread condemnation from global leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, whose country experienced three terror attacks in recent weeks, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Karnataka govt may ban smoke-emitting crackers

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

AFTER states like Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal and Haryana decided to ban the sale of crackers during Deepavali, the Karnataka Government is likely to ban the sale of smoke-emitting firecrackers across the state.

"A few rounds of meeting have been held with health experts, including members of the technical committee on Covid-19. They have suggested to the Health Minister that firecrackers can badly impact the health of those who have already been infected with the disease and even to those who haven't. Hence, smoke-emitting firecrackers may be banned across the state," pointed out a senior ministry official.

A final decision on this, however, will be taken after discussions with Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa in a couple of days, said sources.

> An additional load of pollution in the air will only makes matters worse, especially as a majority of Covid-19 cases in our state are those who have co-morbidities
>
> Dr Satyanarayana Mysore, Manipal Hospitals

Sources said during the meetings, the experts explained to Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar that smoke from crackers will pose a serious challenge. "Since Covid-19 affects the lungs the most, even those who have recovered from the virus will be vulnerable as their immunity and respiratory system will still be fragile. Bursting of smoke-emitting crackers can be dangerous," the committee members have felt.

The sources said Minister Sudhakar has been convinced about the need to ban the sale of firecrackers, but a decision will be taken after consultations with the Chief Minister. "A meeting with the CM has been scheduled and a decision will be taken soon," a Health Ministry official explained. P7

FIGHTING THE VIRUS

Covid-19 can't deter this determined voter

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

A Covid patient shows the thumbs-up sign after casting his vote in the RR Nagar bypoll, at a polling booth in Laggere, Bengaluru, on Tuesday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

LAST Monday, 35-year-old Pinnu Rajesh was admitted to M S Ramaiah Hospital after he tested positive for Covid-19. Little he expect that he will be casting his vote about a week later, wearing a PPE kit. He was among the four Covid-positive voters who cast their vote in Rajarajeshwari Nagar Assembly constituency on Tuesday.

The Election Commission and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) authorities had made all arrangements for the infected voters. They voted after everyone else had done so, and the polling booth was sprayed with disinfectant after the Covid-19 patients had cast their votes.

Rajesh, a native of Andhra Pradesh, came to Bengaluru six years ago and since then, he has been a voter here. He has not missed voting in any election, even back in his home state, ever since he turned 18. A school van driver, he is now doing odd jobs like plumbing to take care of his wife and two children, as schools are shut.

Sounding disappointed with the low voting percentage in the constituency, Rajesh said, "It is a right that everyone should exercise, irrespective of whether it is Covid or non-Covid times. Many people who are fit and fine did not vote, and have missed an opportunity. They cannot question the elected representative."

Explaining his trauma, Rajesh said last week, he had fever for two days, and despite taking medicines, it did not subside. He then underwent a Covid-19 test, which turned out positive, and he was admitted to MS Ramaiah Hospital under BBMP quota. P3

EXPRESS READ

Nirav Modi: UK judge admits CBI, ED evidence

London: A UK judge presiding over the extradition proceedings of Nirav Modi on Tuesday ruled that the evidence submitted by India to establish a prima facie case of fraud and money laundering against him is admissible.

Denied Prez appointment, Punjab CM to lead dharna

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh will lead a relay 'dharna' of Congress MLAs at Delhi's Rajghat on Wednesday following President Ram Nath Kovind's refusal to meet a delegation led by him over the Centre's farm laws. P10

No increase in service charges by PSBs: Finmin

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry on Tuesday said there has been no increase in service charges by any public sector bank, even as Bank of Baroda decided to withdraw changes made for the number of free cash deposit transactions in a bank account per month.

Kerala, Delhi see rise in active Covid-19 cases

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry on Tuesday said Kerala, Delhi, West Bengal and Manipur have shown a rise in the number of active Covid-19 cases between October 3 and November 3, while Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh were the top states which registered a decline in active infections.